

miss his unparalleled expertise and foresight on that issue.

Most of all—in that fight and in many to come—we will miss his compassion and his dedication to serving the most needy among us.

Throughout his career, BOB MATSUI was a champion of the vulnerable, leading the fight for civil rights. He said that he was inspired to go to law school by Clarence Darrow and to go into politics by John F. Kennedy. And he never stopped advancing those ideals.

Imprisoned as a young child in the Japanese-American internment camps of World War II, he authored the landmark bill that provided restitution to Japanese Americans held in those camps and, more important, tendered an official apology on behalf of the government.

Never one to shirk the tough jobs, he worked over decades on the thankless but essential task of improving flood protection for the Sacramento region, and recently reached an historic agreement on that critical issue.

BOB MATSUI was a thoughtful and prescient legislator. An early advocate of free trade, in the early 90s, he provided critical assistance to President Clinton in getting NAFTA through the House—despite opposition from labor groups that traditionally support Democrats. In 2000, he played a key role in obtaining permanent normalized trade relations with China, again at Clinton's behest. And he was a strong backer of giving the President fast track trade authority. At the same time, he was increasingly concerned over how little was being done to help Americans who had lost jobs.

Even those who fought the hardest with BOB over policy issues admired his intelligence and dedication and enjoyed his humor and warmth. He was a truly kind person and we will all miss his friendship.

My thoughts and prayers are with BOB MATSUI's family.

May he rest in peace.

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EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE  
HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE  
HONORABLE ROBERT T. MATSUI,  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM  
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 4, 2005*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 11 expressing profound sorrow on the occasion of the death of the Honorable ROBERT T. MATSUI.

I am saddened by the loss of a great man and wonderful colleague in BOB MATSUI. He was a person dedicated to others, not just in his remarkable public service, but also in his warm and embracing character. His passing is a loss to the people of his district, California, and all Americans who benefited from his wisdom in Congress for the past 26 years.

Most of all, my heart goes out to his family. His wife, Doris, his son, Brian, his daughter-in-law, Amy, and, of course, his granddaughter, Anna, were the most important things in the

world to him, and I only hope that their grief can be tempered by the knowledge of his constant and unwavering love for them.

While it will be difficult for Californians, and all of BOB's colleagues in Washington to accept this tragic loss, I think we owe it to him to remember all of the positive things that BOB stood for. He was the first Japanese-American elected to the Sacramento City Council and one of the first Japanese-Americans to serve in the U.S. Congress.

These are remarkable feats for any American, but are simply astounding coming from BOB MATSUI, who was forced into an internment camp, along with his family, when he was only six months old.

But BOB would never hold a grudge against the country that had done him and so many other Japanese-Americans wrong. He was too great a man, and he had too big a heart. He continued to strive for what was right for decades, using his energy to improve those systems that so many Americans rely on. He was as committed to Social Security and protecting older Americans as he was to upholding the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party, creating a strong future for the next generations.

BOB MATSUI was a terrific mentor and a terrific friend to me. While our time together was cut too short, he provided an excellent role model of how to stay true to your beliefs even in the face of adversity. Today I join all Californians and Americans in mourning Congressman ROBERT MATSUI. Serving with him in this body will always be one of the great honors of my career.